



A FINE TIMBER

WOOD & TRANSFORMATION IN OUR TIME

NOVEMBER 14, 2015-JANUARY 3, 2016



ERIC SERRITELLA

CHUCK SHARBAUGH

BAHK SEON GHI



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EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY

College of Central Florida
APPLETON
MUSEUM of **Art**

RUTH GRIM

curator of exhibitions, Appleton Museum of Art

A Fine Timber: Wood and Transformation in Our Time focuses on three artists currently creating exquisite expressions *in* wood, or *about* wood. Together these artists represent humanity's long-standing relationship with wood, whether it is through finely crafted furniture, objects that recall the forest, or installations that recall the fragility of nature and our responsibility to care for the planet.

Chuck Sharbaugh is a master artisan who creates beautifully crafted cabinets with marquetry decoration in the Arts and Crafts style, a tradition that stretches back to the Renaissance. He is truly a craftsman and his elaborately veneered cabinets remind one of fine pieces from centuries earlier, until the viewer looks closely at the scenes represented and notices the contemporary iconography. The doors of his cabinets open to reveal panels depicting factories, oil refineries, airplanes, highway overpasses and telephone or electrical towers. Sharbaugh consistently wins awards for his work and is considered one of the best in his field. The Museum of Arts and Design in New York, a champion of contemporary artisans, added his work to their collection.

Ceramicist Eric Serritella is a highly accomplished artist who creates incredible works out of clay that look as though they are made from weathered wood and birch bark. His trompe l'oeil

ceramics are widely admired in the art world, and a piece was recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His work brings an interesting component to *A Fine Timber* as his sculptures challenge the viewer in both material and meaning, calling to mind the power of wood within the human psyche. Wood speaks to us in many ways but always in a voice that comes from far in our collective past. It resonates and makes us feel at home in a way that metal, plastic, concrete, etc. never have and never will.

Korean artist Bahk Seon Ghi has exhibited all over the world and has become known for his ethereal installations made from black charcoal strung with invisible nylon thread, that resemble shapes and architecture. The most of-the-moment voice in this exhibition, Bahk Seon Ghi's work brings the viewer squarely back to our time with his airy pieces that remind us that the delicate balance of nature is in our hands. How we impact the Earth is a modern issue with which we all wrestle and to our detriment was largely ignored in decades past. Bahk Seon Ghi's poetic works of art are simple but poignant reminders that all *can* and *will* return to dust; we are only in control of how much we accelerate the process.

The Appleton Museum of Art thanks the artists, lenders and CMay Gallery, Los Angeles for making this exhibition possible.

ERIC SERRITELLA

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work challenges the viewer in both material and meaning. The pieces exemplify how nature maintains its splendors through tenacity and triumph of existence despite the disregard we humans show her. Striving for the life in each creation to foster awareness and influence viewer behavior toward the environment, I hope that at least some will acquire new appreciations and ways of seeing and thus choose to walk with softer steps.

BIOGRAPHY

Eric Serritella is an award-winning ceramicist who lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication from Ithaca College and while at their London Center, studied art and architecture history. After a successful 16-year corporate marketing career, he transitioned to a life devoted to clay. His applied art training came in the form of two artist residencies studying with Ah Leon and other clay masters in Taiwan. Influences on his work include the historic Yixing teapots of the 1600s, Japanese wabi sabi philosophy, Asian calligraphy and paintings, L.C. Tiffany glass windows, and birch trees, which he calls, “the angels of the forest.”

His works are included in numerous permanent collections including The Metropolitan Museum

of Art, the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Carnegie Museum of Art and the Mint Museum, among others. His work is a part of many esteemed private collections, including the Kamm Teapot Foundation – the world’s largest teapot collection.

Serritella has contributed to over 85 exhibitions and has represented at some of the world’s top art and design shows including “TEFAF Maastricht” (Netherlands), “Design Miami/Basel” (Switzerland), “Design Miami” (Florida), “The Salon: Art + Design” (New York), “SOFA Chicago” and “The Smithsonian Craft Show.” His 2013 catalogued solo show at Jason Jacques Gallery in New York City has led to additional international recognition.

Eric Serritella
American, born 1963
Bravado Birch Teapot, 2009
Ceramic
26"x24"x10"
Courtesy of the Elyse Vinitsky
Revocable Trust





Eric Serritella
Travellers, 2010
Ceramic
4.5"x7.25"
Courtesy of the Elyse Vinitzky
Revocable Trust



Eric Serritella
Fallen Angel, 2010
Ceramic
96"x60"
Courtesy of the artist



Eric Serritella
Fiction, 2013
Ceramic
10"x14"x5"
Courtesy of Patricia A. Young

Eric Serritella
Humph! (Teapot), 2011
Ceramic
22"x8"x8"
Courtesy of the artist





Eric Serritella
Paper Birch Basket, 2008
Ceramic
5"X5"X5"
Courtesy of the artist



Eric Serritella
Pine Bark Platter, 2008
Ceramic
8"X24"X10"
Courtesy of the artist



Eric Serritella
Unchaste, 2014
Ceramic
26"x20"x10"
Courtesy of Katherine Seligmann



Eric Serritella
Unfurled, 2013
Ceramic
12"x12"x12"
Courtesy of Julie S. Nathanielsz



Eric Serritella
Birch Burl Bonsai Teapot, 2012
Ceramic
26"x24"x10"
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Eric Serritella
Birch Bark Bowl, 2008
Ceramic
10"x24"
Courtesy of the artist



Eric Serritella
Birch Branch Vase, 2008
Ceramic
16"x6"x5"
Courtesy of the artist

CHUCK SHARBAUGH

ARTIST STATEMENT

The historic European furniture form “cabinet on stand” or “collector’s cabinet” is the vehicle that I’ve referenced in my most recent work. The form allows interaction by the user and expresses the dissimilarity that exists between the exterior architectural features and the vibrant engaging images of the interior facade that are discovered when opened.

When the exterior of the object is first viewed, the cabinet presents a stoic, physically imposing impression. The shapes and symbols used in the construction are drawn from man-made structures including wooden utility poles, electrical towers, bridges and industrial sites that are part of our everyday landscape. The doors’ geometric marquetry images serve to entice the viewer to open them to discover what’s inside.

The doors open to reveal an active, vibrant and inviting display. The architectural features of the exterior design have been used to create different perspectives using marquetry images. Satellite views from space, cities, commercial sites, subdivisions, highway interchanges and airports are incorporated into the marquetry filling the interior doors and drawers. The interior images are meant to surprise and ultimately engage the viewer in the complexity of the detail.

BIOGRAPHY

A resident of Michigan, Chuck Sharbaugh holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He started working in construction, but by 1980 began what would become a 26-year career as a commissioned, finished carpenter and cabinet/furniture maker. Since 2006, he has focused on his own projects, mainly fine-crafted studio furniture recalling the work of Renaissance cabinet makers.

He combines marquetry with rare hardwoods and veneers to create “collector’s cabinets” for the modern age, with symbols from industry, commerce, urban centers and mass transit replacing those from the earlier centuries. His work has been included in over 30 juried exhibitions and the Museum of Arts and Design, New York recently added his work to their permanent collection.



Chuck Sharbaugh
American, born 1945
Across America, 2011
Furniture, solid wood/veneer
61.5"X63.25"X18.5"
Courtesy of the artist



Chuck Sharbaugh
Bay 82, 2006
Furniture, solid wood/veneer
66"X46.5"X20.5"
Courtesy of the artist



Chuck Sharbaugh
Up, 2012
Furniture, solid wood/veneer
69"x60.5"x18.75"
Private Collection



Chuck Sharbaugh
Pale Male Soaring, 2015
Furniture, solid wood/veneer
31.75"X36"X36"
Courtesy of the artist



Chuck Sharbaugh
Pivots & Rows, 2010
Furniture, solid wood/veneer
71.25"X39"X19.5"
Courtesy of the artist

BAHK SEON GHI

ARTIST STATEMENT

In defining his works, Bahk Seon Ghi says, “Charcoal is wood transformed. Therefore, the material of all my works is wood — nothing else.” Bahk Seon Ghi continues, “It (my work) is a continuation of endless penance and agony. What I find most challenging is how to find a method to visually manifest my thoughts—the most painful moment in the struggle to find a methodological solution. Nonetheless, works created after such agony and hard thinking build energy and momentum for the next creation.”

BIOGRAPHY

Bahk Seon Ghi was born in Seonsan, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province in eastern South Korea. His hometown is a very small settlement deep in the mountains, containing only a few households. The surroundings were nature itself — the mountains, wind and trees naturally came to him. Bahk took a special interest in trees and wind and wanted to express nature, which he had closely seen and experienced.

Trees were his initial inspiration. They felt familiar and were easier to depict than mountains or winds; for a material, he chose charcoal — a residue of wood. The artist continues to use the tree motif as inspiration, seen intermittently in his later works. As if proving the theory of Claude Levi-Strauss, an eminent French anthropologist who argued that man cannot help but be influenced by the environment he or she was born into, Bahk gradually built his theory around

charcoal and its relation to wood. In the late 1980s, he began working with charcoal full time and was more interested in hanging charcoal than laying it down. For him, the reason was simple: to hang an object by a strand allows much greater freedom in installation, rather than the constraints of attaching it to the floor or walls.

By starting with the idea of ‘trees,’ followed by various stages of production and installation, Bahk has achieved two objectives. First, he wanted to dominate the space with the physical presence of his work. Secondly, he wished to explore the cycle of nature — generation and extinction — during the transformative process of wood becoming charcoal, all while elevating the material as an object. In Korea and abroad, his strung, black-charcoal formations are acclaimed by critics and collectors as pieces of Oriental painting or abstract art, in spirit.

This text courtesy of the essay “Seon-ghi Bahk: Disarray of Charcoal and Slices” by Jong-geun Kim, art critic and Adjunct Professor of Hongik University, Director of Korean Artist Project from KoreanArtistProject.com and courtesy of Korean Artist Project with Korean Art Museums, 2014.







On pages 26, 27, 28:

Bahk Seon Ghi
Korean, born 1966
An Aggregation 150830, 2015
Charcoal, nylon thread
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist
Loan facilitated through
CMay Gallery, Los Angeles

Bahk Seon Ghi
Water Plate, 2014
Charcoal, nylon thread
Dimensions Variable
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Bahk Seon Ghi
Relationship, 2012
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